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D I S C O U R S E

DELIVERED TO THE

C L E R G Y

OF THE

A R C H D E A C O N R Y O F E L Y,

ON

M A Y 9th & 10th, 1780.

17

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
AND ARCHDEACON OF ELY.

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45

D I S C O U R S E

ON THE

ARTS AND

MANUFACTURES

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND IRELAND

IN THE

SEVENTEENTH

CENTURY

BY

J. H. M.

ESQ.

LONDON

1755

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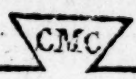
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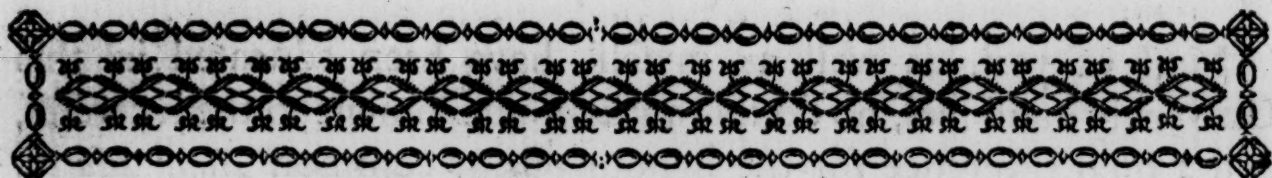
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MUSEUM
BRITANNICVM



A

D I S C O U R S E, &c.



REVEREND BRETHREN,

HAVING never been possessed of any Ecclesiastical Preferment, by which it became necessary for me to attend either an Episcopal, or Archidiaconal Visitation, it is very probable that I may be guilty of several informalities and mistakes in conducting the business of this day. I can have no hesitation, however, in asking, and no doubt indeed of obtaining from your candour, an excuse for every thing of that sort.

Being willing to tread in the steps of my Predecessors; and understanding, that it has been customary for them to address the Clergy at their primary visitation, I shall also venture to trouble you with a few Observations at this time; not meaning for the future to trespass often upon your patience in this way; nor yet precluding myself by this declaration, from doing it, whenever I shall judge it to be a proper occasion.

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Most

Most of you, as well as myself, have been educated in this University; and feel, no doubt, a warm attachment to the interests, and a filial reverence for the honour of our common *Alma Mater*. You will therefore suffer me, I hope, instead of attempting to instruct men older and wiser than myself in the nature and duties of the ministerial function, to step a little perhaps out of the ordinary road, whilst I explain to you my Ideas on a subject of some importance to the honour of the University; and probably of some efficacy towards the support of Christianity. Many of you, I fear, will look upon the project as too vast and visionary, to be attended with success; but knowing, that the most complicated machines are put in motion upon the simplest principles; and not being of a disposition to call out, *there is a lion in the way*, as an excuse for sitting still, I will lay before you without further preface, a few thoughts on the Encouragement of Oriental Literature.

It is not unknown to you, that from the fourth to the fourteenth century, there were few in Europe who understood any of the Oriental languages. Jerome in the fourth century was excellently skilled in them, and zealous in exhorting others to a similar proficiency; but from his time, to the Pontificate of Clement the Fifth, the Hebrew and Arabic tongues seem to have been no where cultivated with success. In the Council holden at Vienne in 1312, it was decreed, that Schools for teaching the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic languages should be erected in the Universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Salamanca, and in some other places. Near two hundred years after the holding of this Council, John Picus prince of Mirandula, and John Rheuclin, are reckoned amongst the first restorers of oriental literature in Italy and Germany; whence it is probable, that the establishments of Clement had failed, in some degree, of the end proposed.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the oriental languages were studied with as great sedulity, as the Greek and Latin. Pagninus and Vatablus in France; Galatinus and Arias Montanus

nus in Spain; Felix Pratensis, and Elias Levita in Italy; Munster and Avenarius in Germany; in Holland, Erpenius and Golius; in England, Pocock, Walton, and Castell, with innumerable others in different countries, were not only very assiduous in the cultivation of the eastern languages, but have also furnished by their works great assistance to those, who shall be disposed to follow them in the same pursuit.

The taste for experimental philosophy, which was introduced into our own, and other countries towards the end of the last century, has given a great turn to the studies of men in every part of Europe. The book of nature is written in an universal language: it may be read, to a greater or less extent, by every one. Men moreover are not anticipated in their philosophical researches by the labours of their predecessors; for every particular subject of natural philosophy is capable of indefinite improvement; and its general object is as extensive, as the nature of things. This delightful investigation of natural phænomena, and their causes, has, it is apprehended, much diverted the attention of most universities in this quarter of the world from the study of language. The translations also which have been made of the best Greek and Roman Writers, have contributed not a little, to the damping of men's ardour in the pursuit of what is called classical knowledge: but however it may be accounted for, the fact, I believe, is certain, that the dead languages are much less generally understood at present, in every part of Europe, than they were 150 years ago; and they will probably become less and less so every day.

But it is no part of my design, to enter into the reasons for or against the revival of Grecian, or Roman literature; let us but once have as good translations of all the oriental books, which are now consuming in the libraries of Europe, as we have of those which are written in the Greek and Latin tongues, and a great part of my wish will be accomplished. Why should the fine talents of those, who have a turn for languages, be for ever confined to the making a few meagre additions to the learned labours of such

as have gone before them, in publishing or commenting on the works of Greek and Roman authors, whilst the extensive field of Arabic, Persic, and Chinese literature remains unknown or unexplored?

It may be objected, that, if we may judge of the worth of the unpublished parts of oriental learning from that of the works which have been already translated, we have no great reason to lament our want of information on the subject. Who would give himself the trouble to read the philosophy of Aristotle, as illustrated by an Arab? Who would form his historical creed from the tales of Persia? Who would employ his time in finding out the morality contained in Oriental proverbs, or think of soothing the anxieties incident to human life by perusing Arabian poetry? Objections, such as these, have no force. We yet know nothing, or next to nothing, of the treasures of eastern learning; but, from what we do know, there is no reason why we should be deterred from endeavouring to know more. Proverbs and Poems have their graces and their uses: but from eastern learning we derive more substantial benefits, than what can be expected from such compositions. We owe Algebra intirely to the Indians, or Arabians: Chymistry, Medicine, Natural History, Geography, and many of the most abstract Sciences are indebted to the Arabians, if not for their birth, at least for their support and protection, when they were abandoned by all the states of Europe. It is said, that the Arabians translated into their own language the most celebrated works of all other nations. If this be a fact, and the learned admit it as such, have we not great reason to believe, that many monuments of Roman, Grecian, Egyptian, and Chaldean literature, may be preserved in the Arabic translations, though the originals are irrecoverably lost? No language, not even the Grecian, after the conquests of Alexander, had ever so extensive a spread as the Arabic after the victories of Mahomet. — But I forbear to enlarge on a subject well known to you all; nor will I remind you of the utility of oriental learning in the interpretation
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of Scripture; it being acknowledged, that the best commentators either of ancient or modern times, from St. Jerome to the present Bishop of London, are those, who have been the most conversant with Hebrew, and the other sister tongues.

It is a work, worthy of the attention of all the Universities in Europe, to undertake the translation of the oriental manuscripts which we are at present possessed of. We have hundreds of volumes in our English libraries; France, Holland, Italy have many; and the library of the Escorial alone, if we may judge from the catalogues which have been lately published, would amply reward all our pains. Men skilled in these languages should be invited from every quarter, formed into a kind of society, and employed for life, under the direction of proper persons, in the drudgery of translation. Nothing, worth notice in this way, can be expected from the detached labours of a few Professors of Hebrew or Arabic; men of liberal education cannot readily be brought to undertake such a task, and if they could, the matter may be effected at a much easier expence by the labours of inferior persons. What would be an adequate reward for three or four needy Turks or Persians, would not be a proper stipend for one man of letters, who should be obliged annually to produce the fruits of his unremitted diligence. But without entering into the particular manner of accomplishing this design, I cannot help being of opinion, *that an institution established at Cambridge, for the express purpose of translating and publishing Oriental Manuscripts*, would redound to the credit of the University; and tend to put the learned world in possession of a very valuable part of literature, of which at present we have but a very imperfect knowledge. There is no reason to be alarmed at the difficulty of this undertaking, when we consider, what the great Industry of Doctor Kennicot has effected in collating the Hebrew manuscripts of the old Testament; for if the ability of one man can do so much, what might not be expected from the joint abilities of a society of men united into a body, for the accomplishing of one single object?

But

But an establishment at home, for the purpose of translating such Oriental manuscripts as are already to be met with in Europe, is but a part of the plan; men should be sent abroad into Persia, India, China, into every country of the Globe where there are Manuscripts of any Antiquity, in order to collect them; for it is a mortifying reflection, that we know very little of the history of the human race; especially when there is a probability, that we might know more. The mouldering hand of time has, indeed, defaced some of the most precious monuments of antiquity; and those few which might have escaped the natural vicissitudes of human things, have been utterly destroyed by the desolation of unnatural war. The pestilent ambition of a few bad men, has left us in a state of irremediable ignorance, I fear, concerning the mutual dependencies of different nations, the primeval population of the globe, and the intellectual improvement of the human race. Yet, much remains to be done. Europe is but lately emerged from a long Barbarism; and there may be countries in Asia, which have never experienced any interruption in the progress of arts, or the cultivation of learning.

According to the Mosaic account, the whole earth has been peopled from that small remnant of mankind, which escaped the universal deluge. But whether we suppose the several migrations to have taken place from the confines of Mount Ararat in Armenia, where the Ark rested; or the plains of Shinar, where Babel was built; still it is probable, that as many colonies would go Eastward, as Westward, in search of settlements. This, I say, seems very probable; yet all the ancient histories, which we are acquainted with, respect the transactions of the human species to the westward of Armenia and Shinar. By casting an eye on a globe, or a map of the world, we shall be convinced of the truth of this observation. Of the Medes, Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Arabians, Greeks, Romans, and other Western nations, we have accounts more or less full and authentic; but concerning the various colonies which, in process of time, after the Deluge, traversed the
plains

plains of Asia from the Indus to the Ganges, from the Ganges to the extremity of China, Tartary, and Japan, profane history is wholly silent; or speaks with extreme diffidence and uncertainty. There can no possible reason, I think, be assigned why the descendants of Noah should have all gone in one direction; for the part of the globe to the east of the settlement of Noah and his family after the flood, was peopled in all likelihood as soon as that to the west. Arts and Sciences have been as successfully cultivated, and the contests for power may have been as sharp, and may have produced as many great Monarchies amongst the inhabitants of the eastern portion of the globe, as we know they did in the western.

——— *Medus ademit*

Affyrrio, Medoque tulit moderamina Perses.

Subjecit Persen Macedo: cessurus et ipse

Romanis. —————

These lines of Claudian contain a compendium of all the ancient history, which the Greeks and Romans, and we, through them have had any account of; but we have good reason to believe, that could the synchronous histories of Indostan, Thibet, Siam, and China be obtained, they would be well worthy of our attention. For if a skill in manufactures be a sign of civilization, we know from various authorities, that the Indians and Chinese were as much superior to the most ancient nations of the western world, in the Arts of dying, japanning, weaving of silk, and linen, and other trades, as they are at present to us. “ And if we may “ be allowed to draw any conclusions from the immense buildings “ now existing, and from the little of the inscriptions, which can “ be interpreted on several of the Choultrys and Pagodas, I think “ it may safely be pronounced, that no part of the world has more “ marks of antiquity for Arts, Sciences, and Civilization, than the “ Peninsula of India from the Ganges to Cape Comorin.” *

Strabo observes, that few of the merchants in his time, who, by sailing up the Nile and the Arabian Gulf, went into India, ever penetrated

* Philos. Transf. 1772. p. 354.

penetrated as far as the Ganges; and that those who did reach it were unlearned, and little fitted for writing the history of a country. He might perhaps as justly have said, that the views of merchants in all ages and countries center in the same point, the acquisition of wealth; and this not being generally to be obtained without much trouble, anxiety, and risk, it ought not perhaps to be expected of them, that they should employ either their industry, or their fortune in clearing up, for the satisfaction of Philosophers, points of no great consequence to their commerce. The zeal with which European merchants have endeavoured to extend their traffic, and European missionaries to propagate their religion, has for the last two or three centuries brought us in a small degree acquainted with the East; but it is still, in a great measure, a *terra incognita*, with respect to its natural and civil history. And the means indeed of future information must be utterly destroyed, if other religious missionaries resemble such as lately were met with in the province of Napal, who made it their boast, that they had burnt three thousand manuscripts. A loss this much to be regretted! since there are many manuscripts to be found amongst the inhabitants of Napal, which treat of the history of India, going back above three thousand years; they are said to be written in the Nagri language, which is thought to be the original language of India, and older than the Shanscritta *. The ingenious Account, which has been published of the Kingdom of Thibet †, is far from satisfying our curiosity; it serves rather to excite our warmest wishes, that proper persons might be sent into that country, and every other part of the east, for the purpose of investigating the ancient and modern history of the nations, which inhabit so considerable a part of the globe.

To men whose minds are chained to the earth by the sordid pursuits of Wealth, or the empty ones of Ambition; who are debilitated by sensual pleasure, or rendered torpid to every arduous exertion by habitual inactivity; who, unconscious of its importance, fritter away this short period of existence in a frivolous at-

tention

* Philos. Transf. 1770. p. 441.

† Ibid. 1776. p. 465.

tention to trivial concerns; in a slavish subserviency to the uniform prejudices of the age or country, in which they happen to be born; to men of this complexion every attempt to investigate the nature of this earth or the history of its inhabitants will appear a chimerical undertaking, originating in idle speculation, and terminating in useless conjecture. But notwithstanding the indifference which many men feel respecting every intellectual accomplishment, which happens not to fall in with their particular mode of study, or apprehension, I doubt not, but there are many of a contrary turn, who would zealously sacrifice their health, riches, and repose in support of any liberal and enlarged plan, which might be concerted for bringing us acquainted with the general history of our species.

We have been accustomed from our infancy, to consider the histories which have been transmitted down to us from the Greeks, as being the undoubted records of real transactions; yet a Gentleman well skilled in the oriental languages, has lately informed us, that in the Persian histories, which treat of the same period of time with the Grecian, there is not a "vestige to be discovered" of the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, Plataea, or Mycale; no mention of the great Cyrus, nor of any king of Persia, who, in the events of his reign, can apparently be "forced into a similitude:" In short, from every research which he has had an opportunity of making, he is of opinion, that there is nearly as much resemblance between the annals of England and Japan, as between the European and Asiatic relations of the same empire during the same period *. — It is an easy matter to accuse this author of great credulity; to ridicule his researches into oriental literature, and hastily to condemn in the gross all Persian historians as mere Romancers, when put in competition with the venerable writers of ancient Greece; but an impartial inquirer after truth will wish the matter to be thoroughly sifted; he will suspend his judgment, till he has examined both sides of the

* Richardson's *Dissert. on the Languages, &c. of Eastern Nations.*

the question, by the rules of sound criticism; and, for this end, he will be desirous of seeing good translations of the principal Persian books, that the learned world in general may be in a situation to weigh their merits.

The writings of Moses have hitherto been considered as the oldest in the world; but, in the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, we are told of a curious history of India composed four thousand years ago, and from thence tracing mankind upwards through several millions of years. This, and all the rest that is delivered concerning the great antiquity of the annals of India, you and I may probably be disposed to consider as a mere fable; but there are many, neither profligate in their manners, nor destitute of talents, who have not the same veneration for the writings of Moses, that we have; and they may consider the Indian annals delivered down by the ancient Bramins, to be as authentic, as those of the Bible; at least they will be perplexed with an uneasy Scepticism, from which nothing but a further examination into the Indian writings can free them. God forbid, that the search of truth should be discouraged for fear of its consequences! the consequences of truth may be subversive of systems of superstition; but they never can be injurious to the rights, or well founded expectations of the human race. We believe the Scriptures, and our hopes of eternal life are built on their truth; but we trust, that no faith can be acceptable to God, which is not grounded on reason; and as reasonable beings we wish not to entertain any hopes, the foundations of which can be shaken by the most rigid inquiry into the history of mankind.

But the antiquity of the Indian annals is not the only circumstance which seems to militate against the Mosaic history; we are told, that the Gentoo scriptures make no mention of the deluge; and that the Bramins affirm, that the Deluge never took place in Indostan *. Now, I look upon the deluge to be a circumstance of such a singular nature, that, supposing it to have happened,

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* Code of Gentoo Laws, Pref. p. 38.

the memory of it could never have been extinguished amongst the generality of the nations, which inhabit the earth. It is not, according to the most received chronology, much above four thousand years since that great event took place; and if any individual had the means of tracing back his pedigree through less, perhaps, than 140 generations, he would find either Shem, or Ham, or Japhet to have been his great progenitor. It is very possible for a tradition, which has passed through so many hands, to have been much altered; yet the tradition of so signal a calamity, as the destruction of the human race by a deluge, could not, I conceive, have been wholly lost, except perhaps amongst a few nations utterly buried in Barbarism. And, in fact, learned men* have abundantly proved, that a tradition concerning a deluge has prevailed in every quarter of the globe; not only amongst the Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Scythians; but amongst the Iroquois, Mexicans, Brasilians, Peruvians and other nations of America; and I have been informed by one of the navigators to the Southern Hemisphere, that the inhabitants of Otaheita being asked concerning their origin, simply answered, that their supreme God a long time ago, being angry, dragged the earth through the sea, and their Island being broken off was preserved. Now if a tradition concerning a deluge has prevailed in almost every part of the globe, except in India and China, (for some add China likewise) may it not be a reason for us to hesitate a little, till we know more of those countries, before we positively affirm, that they have no such tradition, especially when there is a diversity of testimony upon the subject? For it deserves to be remarked, that what is said in the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, relative to the want of a tradition concerning a deluge in the Gentoo Shasters, (or Scriptures) is contradicted by an author, who lived in India, and wrote his Account of the Sect of the Banians

* The curious reader will find a good collection of the principal Heathen Accounts of the Flood, in Catcott's Treatise on the Deluge, p. 98. See also Grotius de Verita. C. Rel.; and, above all, the most learned and ingenious Work of the present century, Bryant's Mythology.

nians about 150 years ago; for he expressly says, that he made his collections, by the help of interpreters, from the Shaster; and he has the following words: — “ as if the world needed cleansing of his defilement, and pollution, there came a flood, that covered all nations in the depths — and so concluded the first age of the world according to the tradition of the Banians.” * As to China, there are also different accounts; some affirming, that the Chinese have a tradition concerning the deluge †; others denying that they have any ‡; but, as many are of opinion, that the certainty of the Chinese annals cannot be carried up to a period antecedent to the deluge §, have we not great reason to expect, that a more minute investigation of the history of that people will tend to remove the difficulties which many labour under in their attempts to derive all the human species from one common stock.

I know, that many look upon the account of an universal deluge as a mere fable; and hold the idea of all mankind having originated from a common stock, whether you suppose that stock to have been Adam, or Noah, as very unphilosophical: this is not a place to combat their philosophy; but surely it is no trifling proof of the Novelty of the human race upon the surface of the earth, that no part of ancient history, which deserves credit, reaches, according to the opinion of Varro the most learned of the Romans, beyond the first Olympiad. The annals, indeed, of India and China seem to form an objection to this observation; but future
exami-

* Lord's Discovery of the Banian Religion, Chap. 6.

† De diluvio multa est apud Sinicos Scriptores mentio: de illius origine causaque nulla. Quod proinde Noëticum-ne fuerit, an aliud Sinis peculiare, quale Ogygium olim in Attica, in Thessalia Deucalioneum nondum liquet. Illud pro certo comperitur, Sinensem de diluvio historiam non multum a Noëtico abesse, quippe quæ ter mille circiter Annis vulgarem Christi epocham prægreditur. — Martinii Histor. Sin. L. 1. p. 12. See also Le Chou-King, par M. de Guignes.

‡ Ad universale diluvium quod attinet, nihil adhuc quidem certi vel explorati, in Sinarum libris ac monumentis inveni. Couplet Præfa. ad Tab. Chron.

§ See Du Halde's History of China; and Mémoires concernant l'Histoire, les Sciences, les Arts, &c. des Chinois, à Paris 1776. — The letters indeed of De Mailla prefixed to the Histoire generale de la Chine, carry the Origin of the Chinese to an Æra not consistent with the Hebrew Chronology, but sufficiently conformable to that of the Septuagint.

examination will, probably, shew it to be an objection of no weight. The Chaldeans formerly boasted, as the Indians and Chinese do now, of their great Antiquity; and were said to have kept astronomical observations for four hundred and seventy thousand years: but when Aristotle intreated Callisthenes to inquire into the antiquity of the Chaldeans, he received for answer, that, upon the taking of Babylon by Alexander, he could not find that they were possessed of any observations which reached above 1903 years backwards*. Now Babylon was taken by Alexander 331 years before Christ; which number, being added to the former, gives 2234 years before Christ, for the utmost known limit of Babylonish antiquity; and this number falls, upon the most moderate computation, above one hundred years short of the æra assigned for the deluge.

If therefore we should be able to find in the histories of the Eastern nations as certain traditions concerning a deluge, and as certain proofs of the invalidity of their pretensions to any great antiquity, as are confessedly to be met with in every other quarter of the globe, should we not have great reason to acquiesce in the account given by Moses of the deluge, and the subsequent spreading of the descendants of Noah over all the Earth, notwithstanding the difficulties which may attend our endeavours to explain the manner in which the deluge was effected, or the doubts which some have suggested concerning its having ever taken place from their not being able to discover any vestiges of it on the surface of the Earth?

We had been taught by Woodward, and others, to look upon the shells and other exuviae of fishes, which are found in most mountainous countries, as unequivocal marks of a deluge; and to consider the impressions of plants, which are met with far beneath the surface of the earth in many mines, especially in those of coal, as proofs of the plants themselves being buried there by the deluge; but all these, and other similar conclusions are now to be abandoned; for it is the opinion, not of a shallow dabbler
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* Vossius de *Ætate Mundi*, Cap. ix.

in the Science of nature, but of the great Linnæus himself, that whatever marks there may be of a slow and almost insensible conversion of sea into dry land, there are none of a deluge any where to be found. — *Cataclysmi universalis certa rudera ego nondum attigi, quousque penetravi; minus etiam veram terram Adamiticam, sed ubique vidi factas ex Æquore Terras, et in his mera rudera longinqui sensim præterlapsi ævi* *.

I am far from subscribing to this opinion; but were it even admitted to be true, you will probably think, that an universal tradition concerning a deluge is a more certain proof of the fact, than the hypothesis of a natural historian can be of to the contrary.

But besides the universality of the tradition concerning a deluge, which a more minute acquaintance with the general history of mankind would probably establish, other proofs of a common Origin might be expected from the inquiry. The descendants of Noah probably lived together as one family after the deluge, till their increasing numbers forced them to separate, in search of new habitations; but whilst they remained united as one body, they would have many customs civil and religious in common; would be acquainted with the make and application of many instruments, military and œconomical; and this degree and kind of knowledge would accompany the several colonies into every part of the globe; so that one might reasonably enough expect, that all nations, at least, in their infancy, would have some agreement in things of this sort, on the supposition that they were all derived from the same root. If Great Britain should in the course of two or three thousand years sink into that state of Barbarism, in which Cæsar found it, yet it is probable, that from a similarity of customs then subsisting in Britain, and America, a philosopher might investigate a common Origin. You would not allow me time to enlarge upon several customs, which were very general, and are too singular to have sprung from any common necessity of mankind; such as the Olive branch being a signal of peace, not only amongst Greeks and Romans, but likewise amongst the Alpine nations,

* Systema Naturæ, Tom. III. p. 5.

nations, who met Hannibal in his passage; amongst the Americans, who addressed Columbus; amongst other barbarians mentioned by Dampier; and among the inhabitants of the southern Isles, discovered by our late navigators. Human sacrifices, serpent worship, cuttings in the flesh at funerals, sounding of trumpets, &c. during eclipses, and many other customs might be mentioned; and a further investigation may still discover more, which have had almost an universal prevalence amongst mankind. Add to this the similarity of shape observable in the spears, bows, trumpets, drums, hatchets, chisels, hooks, nets, boats, and many other instruments of the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Egyptians, Scythians, Americans, Chinese, Indians, New Zealanders, and most other nations; and we may perhaps be induced to think that this similarity of customs and instruments amongst nations very distant in situation, and in other respects wholly different in manners, may point in some degree towards a common Origin of the human race. By way of illustration, I will mention a few customs, which were wholly the same amongst people as far removed from each other as the Egyptians and Peruvians.

The most ancient temples of the Egyptians had no statues; and the famous temple of the Sun in Peru is said to have had none.

The Egyptians embalmed the bodies of their kings, and converted their sepulchres into temples; the Peruvians preserved the carcases of their dead kings with as much art as the Egyptians; and placed them on golden seats in their temple.

The Egyptians held the rainbow (that token by which God covenanted never more to destroy the earth by a flood) in the highest veneration; the Peruvians built a temple to the rainbow; painted its image on the walls of the temple; and celebrated its appearance by clapping of hands, and other marks of festivity. Their kings, moreover, had a rainbow and two serpents painted on their shields, as mystic symbols probably of the lapse of our first parents, and of the preservation of Noah.

The Egyptians held sacred a perpetual fire; the Peruvians did
the

the same, and had a college of virgins dedicated to the sun for its guardians.

The Egyptians divided the zodiac into twelve parts; the Peruvians did the same, and used the same year with the Egyptians.

The Egyptian priests, before the celebration of their sacred rights, were obliged to use connubial abstinence, to bathe, and to fast; the Peruvian priests were subject to similar injunctions.

The Egyptian women made sacred cakes of flour, which they offered to the queen of heaven; — at their principal solar festivals called *Raymi* and *Citua*, the Peruvian women did the same.

To mention but one circumstance more — Diodorus Siculus informs us, that, of the three parts, into which Egypt was divided, the priests had one for the maintenance of religion; the Peruvians made a similar division of their territory, and dedicated one part out of three to the Sun; and, from the revenue arising from that part, they supported the priests of the Sun, and the whole of their religious establishment*.

I am not here undertaking to derive the Peruvians from the Egyptians; but simply to shew, that an accurate attention to the customs of mankind in different parts of the globe might serve as a clue so far at least to connect different nations, as to make us receive with less reluctance, than some men shew, the Mosaic relation of the manner, in which the earth has been peopled.

The discoveries, relative to the Geography of the Globe, which have been made by British navigators, under the auspices of his Majesty, will ever be remembered to his honour. But navigators, though animated by the spirit of enterprise, and possessed of the most enlarged understandings, have seldom any favourable opportunity of becoming acquainted with the civil and religious customs, oral traditions, and written histories of the nations, which they may happen to meet with. Information of this kind, such as one would wish to rely on, cannot ordinarily be obtained without a long and familiar intercourse with the inhabitants of a country.

But

* Compare Witsii *Ægyptiaca* with the history of Peru by Garcilasso de la Vega.

But the subject is infinite and I must have already wearied out your attention; the sum of what I would advance is this — that a translation of the chief Oriental Manuscripts, and an examination into the ancient and modern state of the Manners, Arts, and Literature of the Eastern nations, would greatly contribute towards perfecting our knowledge of the Natural History of the Globe, and of the Civil History of the human Species; and, in particular, it would, I verily trust, tend to remove many of the difficulties, which have been conceived against the Authority of Moses, from the supposed high antiquity of the eastern histories, and their silence concerning a deluge.

As to the means of accomplishing this end, they might be pointed out with great facility. A small society of proper persons, part of whom should be employed at home in translating, and the other part in travelling to collect materials, would complete the business in half a century. The public expence, attending the maintenance of such a society, would be but as a drop in the ocean, compared with what is annually expended for less beneficial purposes; but, without increasing the public burdens, by recurring to Parliamentary liberality, we need have no fear of obtaining from Royal Munificence, or private benefaction such aids, as when added to other resources, which the University has a prospect of speedily possessing, would be sufficient for the purpose.

I hope, no Apology will be thought necessary for having entered so fully into a literary subject; when it is considered, that I am addressing a body of Clergy; and that within the precincts of the University of Cambridge.



But the subject is infinite and I must have already wearied out your attention: the sum of what I would advance is this — that a translation of the chief Oriental Manuscripts, and an edition of the ancient and modern state of the Manners, Arts, and Literature of the Eastern Nations, would greatly contribute to the advancement of our knowledge of the Natural History of the Globe, and of the Civil History of the human species; and in particular, it would, I verily trust, tend to remove many of the difficulties, which have been connected against the accuracy of Moses, from the supposed high antiquity of the eastern nations, and their silence concerning a deluge.

As to the means of accomplishing this end, they might be found of our will, great facility. A small society of proper persons, part of whom should be employed at home in translating, and the other part in travelling to collect materials, would complete the business in half a century. The public expense, attending the maintenance of such a society, would be but as a drop in the ocean, compared with what is annually expended for less beneficial purposes; but without increasing the public burdens, by recurring to Parliamentary assistance, we need have no fear of obtaining from Royal Munificence, or private benevolence such aid, as when added to other resources, which the University has a prospect of presently possessing, would be sufficient for the purpose.

I hope, no apology will be thought necessary for having entered so fully into a literary subject, when it is considered, that I am addressing a body of Clergy; and that within the precincts of the University of Cambridge.